

Rural District of Winslow.

Black

Medical Officer of Health's Report.

1909.

EDWIN J. FRENCH, PRINTER, WINSLOW.

To the Winslow Rural Sanitary Authority.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the pleasure to present my twenty-ninth annual Report to you.

As you will see, 1909 was a healthy year. We had 97 deaths in all, of which eleven were Infants.

There was only one death from notifiable Diseases—an imported case—which was not seen by a doctor before death. Only one death from Zymotic Disease is very satisfactory. Pulmonary complaints accounted for 23 deaths, and Cancer for 9. The birth rate is annually smaller. The number of births was 122.

Another matter of congratulation is the small number of notifications. There were none from Enteric, only 2 from Scarlatina, and 2 from Diphtheria. A girl came to a School in the No. 3 District and developed a Scarlatina Rash. Unfortunately we have no Infection Hospital, and as it was impossible to allow her to infect the whole School, (including the day girls, and possibly their families), she was removed to a house where a trained nurse could look after her, and where no children lived. Of course, the usual selfishness was displayed, some complaining that thereby their residence was nearer the infection. Presumably the disease might spread wholesale so long as the remotest chance of their own immunity was assured. The result of the arrangement was excellent. The girl left the town in due course and no other person was infected.

The other case of Scarlatina was uneventful, occurring in No. 1 District in a lone farmhouse where isolation was easily and effectually secured.

The single Zymotic death was regrettable, a boy, who was ill with sore throat, was not recognized as seriously ill until too late, and he was not seen alive by a Medical man. At an Inquest held, a sister gave evidence that she had had a sore throat away from home and felt very ill, came home, and her brother subsequently sickened with the same complaint. The Medical evidence at the Inquest was conclusive of Diphtheria, and a brother was undoubtedly suffering from it at the time. There was much complaint of a foul drain near their cottage. This has been opened and the old drain pipes replaced by properly socketed ones.

There were many children attending the Schools at this village who were reported ill and unable to attend their classes. I saw them all, but although their throats were congested and the children generally suffered from Influenza Colds—sometimes 5 or 6 in a family—they had nothing of the nature of Diphtheria.

There were therefore only 4 Zymotic Diseases reported for the year and in no case did the disease spread beyond those notified.

The Local Government Board have issued circulars to Medical men in the Poor Law Service, commanding them to report all cases of Phthisis to the Sanitary Authority. The book for the two years is empty. No case has been reported. These circulars are presumably a preliminary to a general compulsory order on the whole community. The crusade against Phthisis is having its effect.

The lessening disgusting habit of expectorating in public resorts (due to public notices), and the enjoinder of the open window by night has had beneficial results, and will have more as a more enlightened mind is gradually but surely borne in on the general public. One still sees on one's nocturnal rounds, closely closed windows, with lamps or night lights burning to keep off evil spirits, and the general dread of the powers of darkness, and one's olfactory organs are still more assailed by entrance into these closely shut-up rooms, with every crevice stuffed up, including the chimney, and the little pure air remaining for the inmates to breathe being effectually eliminated by foul lamps and floating wicks.

My previous Reports have alluded fully to our water supply in town and villages. I have nothing to add. The supply is neither better nor worse.

The Local Government Board desire to be informed precisely what arrangements are made by the Council for the inspection of meat in the district, and they request that the Medical Officer of Health may be instructed to include in his annual Report an account of these arrangements, showing how many slaughter houses there are in the district, whether they are visited at times of slaughtering, whether there is an Inspector with a special certificate in meat inspection, how many carcasses were found to be tuberculous, &c. As you know, we have no certified Inspector, and the slaughter houses are not visited except in the ordinary course of general inspection. The number of slaughter houses is 23.

The notification of Births Act has not been adopted.

The Council have not taken any action in causing Dairy Cows to be examined by Veterinary Surgeons. Many Private Firms in London have their own Medical and Veterinary Inspectors of Farms and Cattle.

The Bakehouses have been visited. They were all satisfactory. In the country there is plenty of room, and there are none underground, and none connected directly with the living rooms. We have no real factories in the proper sense of the term. I consider all the district has been properly inspected.

There are no glaring insanitary conditions. New Drainage has been completed at Great Horwood, Stewkley, and Claydon. The Stewkley effluent does not satisfy the Thames Conservancy, that is a complaint made to most Authorities in the Thames Valley.

Nine new Houses have been erected and 5 demolished. One house was condemned as unfit for human habitation. There is want of Cottage accommodation in some parts. It is evidently better for the inhabitants to live under a roof if it is ever so poor, than to be turned into the streets by the Inspector.

The Rainfall was under 23.69, not above the average, though it was considered a wet year. There were many wet days in the summer but no great quantity of rain fell.

February, 1910.

Believe me,

Yours faithfully,

T. F. VAISEY,

Medical Officer of Health.

